

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (withdrawn): A method for selectively increasing the production of propionate in the gastro-intestinal tract of a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.

Claim 2 (withdrawn): A method for decreasing blood cholesterol levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.

Claim 3 (withdrawn): A method for decreasing blood triglyceride levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.

Claim 4 (withdrawn): A method for decreasing very low density lipoprotein levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.

Claim 5 (withdrawn): A method for increasing high density lipoprotein levels in a mammal comprising the step of administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran.

Claim 6 (currently amended): A method for increasing insulin sensitivity in a mammal comprising ~~the step of selectively increasing production of propionate in a gastro-intestinal tract of the mammal by~~ orally administering a nutritional composition comprising dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000 wherein dextran is administered in an amount from about ~~2g-10g~~ per day to about 15g per day.

Claim 7 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 1 wherein the dextran is a high molecular weight dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000.

Claim 8 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 1 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligo saccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, or xylo-oligosaccharides, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 9 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 1 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids and poor in saturated fatty acids.

Claim 10 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 2 wherein the dextran is a high molecular weight dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000.

Claim 11 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 2 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligo saccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, or xylo-oligosaccharides, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 12 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 2 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids and poor in saturated fatty acids.

Claim 13 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 3 wherein the dextran is a high molecular weight dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000.

Claim 14 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 3 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligo saccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, or xylo-oligosaccharides, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 15 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 3 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids and poor in saturated fatty acids.

Claim 16 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 4 wherein the dextran is a high molecular weight dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 4 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligo saccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, or xylo-oligosaccharides, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 4 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids and poor in saturated fatty acids.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 5 wherein the dextran is a high molecular weight dextran having a molecular weight above about 500,000.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 5 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligo saccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, or xylo-oligosaccharides, and mixtures thereof.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): The method according to Claim 5 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source which is rich in monounsaturated fatty acids and poor in saturated fatty acids.

Claim 22 (canceled)

Claim 23 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 6 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises at least one component selected from the group consisting of inulin, fructo-oligosaccharide, galacto-oligosaccharides, and xylo-oligosaccharides, and a mixture thereof.

Claim 24 (previously presented): The method according to Claim 6 wherein the nutritional composition further comprises a lipid source that includes a monounsaturated fatty acid and a saturated fatty acid and wherein the monounsaturated fatty acid provides at least 50% of energy of the lipid source and the saturated fatty acid provides less than 20% of energy of the lipid source.